Puget Sound Partnership
Science-Policy Work Group Concept

The Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Science Panel have all indicated support for working together on critical issues. This handout identifies what small "science policy" work groups could do and how they could be organized.

Proposed purpose of work groups

To facilitate science-policy discussions so that 1) scientific work done in support of Partnership work is relevant and timely and 2) policy decisions have scientific basis and input.

Proposed structure and practice

- Topics organized around priority science-related issues for this biennium.
- Working list of topics for 2009-2011 (see descriptions below):
    1. Performance Management (including accountability, ecosystem indicators and intermediate outcomes, ecosystem monitoring, adaptive management, State of the Sound reporting)
    2. Threats to Puget Sound Health (including Integrated Ecosystem Assessment related to threats assessment, watershed characterizations)
    3. Management Strategies (also including Integrated Ecosystem Assessment management strategy evaluation; would have focused sub-groups starting with (a) stormwater/land use, (b) nutrient and pathogen control, (c) nearshore restoration; others to be formed as needed
- Each core group comprised of one or two members each from the Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Science Panel, one Partnership lead staff to track work, and Partnership science staff (could be loaned formally or informally).
- Each group would have access to science teams or experts working on specific related issues. For example, the performance management group would help make sure that the Phase II indicator development is relevant and timely to Partnership needs, whereas a team of scientists would conduct the analytic work.
- Meeting frequency to be determined by group—should be fairly infrequent with full group, but as needed early on to scope work and then periodic check-ins to ensure that results are lining up with policy needs.
- Core participants from the ECB and Science Panel should be asked by David or the Leadership Council

Proposed work groups for 2009-2011

1. Performance Management Framework and Reporting

Purpose: Help guide development of the performance management framework and development of the State of the Sound and other report card needs. This group will have sub-groups that need to meet and advise as needed on specific topics.

Tasks:

- Guide State of the Sound content and process
- Guide/coordinate Phase II indicators project so that the technical and policy work are guided by what PSP needs in 2009, 2010
- Guide policy identification of ecosystem indicators for reporting
- Help develop and confirm intermediate policy-based outcomes for reporting
- Review and refine ecosystem level conceptual/logic models (technical work)
- Help ensure that monitoring and indicators work are integrated.
- Guide action accountability and reporting
- Guide development of adaptive management framework

2. Threats to Puget Sound Health

Purpose: Develop questions and guide work related to identifying geographic distribution of threats, their relative magnitude (what is most urgent), and identify what is known about linking threats to the condition of specific species, habitats, water quality, quantity or human health and well-being. This group provides the bridge between indicators of ecosystem health (from group #1) and strategies to achieve goals (in group #3).

Tasks:

- Guide IEA work related to estimating spatial distribution and magnitude of threats
- Guide watershed characterizations
- Review and refinement of ecosystem level conceptual/logic models (technical work)
- Guide evaluation of priorities for stormwater retrofits
- Gide development of toxics loading inventory
- Guide nutrient and dissolved oxygen modeling

3. Action Agenda Management Strategies

Purpose: Guide work to design, evaluate, and prioritize strategies. This overall group will have three sub-groups to start:

a) Stormwater and land use

Initial tasks:

- Guide scenario development for IEA watershed modeling to explore how land use and stormwater management can work together to modify stream flows and water quality. Getting specific suggestions from practitioners about which stormwater or land-use management practices they would like to see modeled to improve relevance.
- Guide work on how to use the toxics loading inventory to make decisions about toxics reduction strategies
- Advise Partnership on levee maintenance issues and resolution of interests related to floodplain development and levee maintenance

b) Nutrient and pathogen control

Initial tasks*:*

- Synthesize nutrient loading, dissolved oxygen modeling, and technology assessments to inform decisions about nutrient control by advanced wastewater treatment

c) Nearshore restoration

Initial tasks:

- Integrate PSNERP and NOAA IEA modeling projects and tasks with PSP work. Identify what PSP wants to accomplish in this biennium, key tasks, and which PSNERP/NOAA IEA analyses can contribute